

## King's Cross Story Palace Overview

### 1. Project Heritage Focus

The King's Cross Story Palace project will focus on the social and community heritage of the King's Cross area, paying particular attention to the stories of underrepresented groups. The project will emphasise the experiences of long-term residents, newcomers, workers, revellers, local groups and organisations as well as significant events and sites of interest.

It will highlight the stories of this key London area for those who have lived, worked and played there - from long term residents of neighbourhoods such as Caledonian Road, Argyle Square and Somers Town to railway workers who laid the tracks, squatters in the 1980s and party goers visiting The Scala, The Cross, Canvas or The Key.

The social and political significance of King's Cross and it's neighbourhoods is of enormous importance to local residents. This has been illustrated through campaigns that have sought to assert and protect it in response to substantial regeneration and change. These campaigns have included the King's Cross Railway Lands Group, which opposed development in the early 2000s, the 1960s campaign to save St. Pancras Station and Hotel and the "Battle for Balfe Street" in the 1970's to protest proposed developments involving multiple generations of residents.

This heritage has been captured and exhibited in the past, by projects such as the *50 Years, 50 Voices* exhibition, The Guardian's *Street Stories* walking tour and the *King's Cross Voices* oral history project. Yet there are many personal and institutional collections still to be uncovered. This project will signpost to existing collections and projects, enhancing them and adding to them where possible, and at the same time record, enrich, digitise, curate and share new stories and collections relevant to the area.

### 2. Project Activity

Our project will nurture a diverse mix of volunteers and participants who are passionate about connecting with people to collect, share and preserve community history. The network will be supported by Historypin digital tools and the Building Exploratory's heritage engagement methods to go out into the community to collect, enrich, preserve, share and reuse cultural heritage. Staff, volunteers and participants will be trained in research, interview skills, conservation, project management and digital skills. The material gathered during the project will be disseminated in a variety of accessible formats to ensure that the widest possible audience is reached.

#### Partnerships

The success of the project will depend on the project team's ability to nurture a partner network that has been built up over the Development Phase. The network of partners will represent, in large part, the main conduit to our audiences. Our partners will fall into the following categories:

- Community Engagement Partners - Local organisations, already carrying out grassroots community development activity, which will enable the project team to tap into local knowledge, expertise, communities and networks. They include: social housing providers such as Origin and Peabody; community associations

in Somers Town and Saint Pancras and publicly funded initiatives such as North London Cares.

- Cultural, Learning and Faith Partners – Organisations with a cultural and learning organisations and faith groups offer a different ways to engage the community. We will work with the The British Library Learning Team and smaller organisations and groups, such as Saint Pancras Old Church and King’s Cross Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre.
- Research and Volunteer Partners – this group of partners will provide access to content for the digital archive. It is comprised of organizations with local or specialist knowledge, archive collections and local networks who will provide: specialist training for partners, volunteers and project staff, access to archives and archival material, photographs and drawings, create resources including toolkits and guides, develop heritage walks and provide venues.
- Other Partners - a wide range of additional organisations and individuals will be engaged to provide specialist support and specific input to the project including archaeology, photography and illustration.

### **Audiences**

Our primary audiences will be drawn from communities contained within the neighbourhoods north and south of the Euston Road, including Caledonian Road, Argyle Square, Brunswick, Somers Town and the transport hubs of St Pancras and King’s Cross stations, which straddle both Camden and Islington.

The population of this area is approximately 56,000 and is extremely diverse, including sizeable groups of Bangladeshi, Somali, African and Caribbean origin. The local population scores highly on indicators of deprivation and disadvantage compared to borough averages, with poverty amongst children and older people, health inequalities, lower life expectancy and crime being the most striking.

### **Public Engagement**

The project will create public storytelling activities, publications, exhibitions, and workshops for people of all ages. Through these, community residents will directly experience, respond to and creatively interpret heritage. Our goal is to make these sharing gatherings a regular part of community life in King’s Cross. We will also reach out to new audiences for local heritage, including the King’s Cross diaspora, who can now be involved remotely, and commuter audiences who feel ownership of the area’s transport hubs.

### **Measurement and Evaluation**

The project team will continuously evaluate and adjust the project programme, measuring the social value, user experience and financial impact of project activities. These measurements and corrections will further develop the organisational capacity and resilience of all partner organisations. For the first time, it will provide current analyses of community contributions and engagement. A plan will be developed to ensure that project activities are sustained after the end of the initial project funding by developing local commercial and non-commercial partnerships.

### **Marketing and Publicity**

The project will be marketed and communicated through a mix of PR and marketing activity for the project overall and around specific events and public activity. This will incorporate both print material and online and social media campaigns.

## **3. Project Outputs**

King's Cross Story Palace plans to produce a range of digital and physical outputs during the project, including:

- **A Collection Hub on Historypin**  
One of the major outputs will be a digital archive consisting of a collections hub on Historypin.org with material collected over the course of the project. This will be a dedicated community area open for the addition of further pinning, commenting and contributions once the project has finished.
- **"100 Stories 100 Years"**  
Over the course of the project we will develop a storytelling methodology in order to record and showcase 100 stories from individuals representing 100 years of King's Cross history. This will consist of the life story of participants, made up of a series of chapters or moments enhanced with archival material from personal and institutional collections.
- **Exhibitions**  
A series of exhibitions will offer opportunities to present work in progress and the final project outcomes. Small community exhibitions will take a modular form and will display material generated by participant groups. A larger public exhibition will be curated at the end of the project to celebrate its achievements and to launch the digital archive.
- **Illustrated Walking Maps**  
Two illustrated walking maps will be prepared for widespread distribution across the King's Cross area. The content for the maps will be generated through the community programme of storytelling and will include feature places of historic interest brought to life by the stories and memories of participants.
- **Young People's Guide to King's Cross**  
Working with the House of Illustration, we will create a Young People's Guide to King's Cross based on life story interviews with older people within their community and historic information gathered and compiled by young people from Regent High School. They will work with a local historian and illustrator to identify heritage assets to pair with the stories and design a printed guide.
- **Short Film**  
A short film compiling a handful of the storytellers from 100 Stories, 100 Years will be made in partnership with a local film maker. It will present a series of vignettes from individuals we have encountered through the project.
- **Commuter Engagement**  
Video footage, key messages and information featuring the stories of King's Cross will be presented in commuter areas as part of our partnership with Network Rail. This will aim to engage the hundreds of thousands of commuters passing through the station on a weekly basis and encourage them to use the digital archive to record their stories and experiences of commuting to and from the station.

#### **4. Heritage Lottery Fund's Outcomes**

The project has been awarded considerable level of funding on the grounds that it helps to delivery key Heritage Lottery Fund outcomes. The following outcomes will be delivered by the project:

*What difference has the project made for heritage?*

(i). Heritage is Better Managed

Heritage materials are digitised, indexed and consolidated on a digital public platform that facilitates access and management.

(ii). Heritage is Better Identified and Recorded

A wider range of materials representing different perspectives on the history of the King's Cross area are captured and preserved in managed archives, including as-yet-unrecorded materials that reflect the histories of diverse groups of people in the area.

(iii). Heritage is Better Interpreted

New and existing materials are curated and presented to the public in the context of the histories of diverse groups of people in the area, facilitating interpretation.

*What difference has the project make for people?*

(i). People Have Volunteered Time

The project has managed to attract non-traditional volunteers into heritage volunteering in the area, and volunteers in the project had an enjoyable experience.

(ii). People Have Developed Skills

Participants in the project and project volunteers have developed better digital skills along with the skills required to identify, conserve and share their local heritage.

(iii). People have Learnt about Heritage

Participants of all ages, including existing and new local residents, have learned more about the heritage of King's Cross, and understand the social history of the area.

*What difference has the project make for communities?*

(i). A Wider Range of People will have Engaged with Heritage

A wide range of people connected to the local area have engaged with the project through workshops, events, exhibitions, walks and talks, and interviews.

(ii). The Local Area is a Better Place to Live, Work and Visit

People living and working in our King's Cross neighbourhoods have more connection to the place and to each other, as a result of conversations across different groups in the area through oral histories and digitisation activities. Participants have also increased their participation in local organisations, events and activities, creating a sense of belonging and closer community ties.

(iii). Our Organisations & Local Organisations are more Resilient

The iteration of an effective methodology for engaging large numbers of people in heritage recording and storytelling activity will equip us with new tools and resources which will underpin our future development. Furthermore, groups and individuals are equipped with the capacity and skills required to continue to add to the archive over the coming decades.